Before sailing from Lisbon on July 8th, 1497, Da Gama conferred publicly with Zacuto and took affectionate leave of him in the presence of the whole crew. And, on his arrival at Anchediva, not far from Goa, the explorer was greeted by a tall European with a flowing white beard—a Jew from Posen, who had found his way to India after incredible adventures, and had risen to the rank of Admiral to the Viceroy of Goa, whom he had persuaded to treat the strangers kindly. Da Gama's conduct towards the old man was incredibly ungrateful, even according to the brutal fifteenth-century standards. He had him seized and tortured until he consented to be baptised and to pilot the Portuguese flotilla in Indian waters. Gaspard da Gama (as he was henceforth known) subsequently accompanied Cabral on his voyage to the East in 1502, the latter being instructed to follow his advice in all matters. At Cape Verde, on the return voyage, he met and was consulted by Amerigo Vespucci, then setting out to explore the eastern coast of South America; and the Tuscan explorer (who gave America her name) referred to him in his writings in terms of the highest esteem and admiration.

Joseph Vecinho himself (to whom reference has been made above) played a role in the age of the maritime discoveries no less important and barely less prominent than that of his master, Zacuto. He held the rank of physician-in-ordinary to Joao II of Portugal, and hence

enjoyed great influence at the Portuguese Court. His opinion was regularly asked on all questions relating to science. When, in 1484, Columbus laid before the Portuguese ruler his plan for exploring the western route to the Indies, it was submitted to a *junta* of five experts, who included Joseph Vecinho and a Jewish mathematician named Moses. Vecinho, as we have seen, was also one of the Commission which adopted